

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1520

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 6569

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG PFOR DCNF

SUBJ: GULF CONSIDERING PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN

REF: QUITO 6473

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR DISCUSSED POSSIBILITY OF "INDIRECT" PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN TO PLACE GULF'S CASE BEFORE ECUADOREAN PUBLIC IN MEETING SEPT. 9 WITH COMPANY OFFICIALS. EMBASSY OFFERED GULF NAMES OF JOURNALISTS IT CONSIDERS ABLE AND WILLING TO PRESENT BALANCED VIEW, BUT EMPHASIZED THAT EMBASSY COULD TAKE NO OVERT ACTION. GULF MANAGER O'BRIEN REACTED FAVORABLY TO SUGGESTION AND REPORTED SEPTEMBER 13 THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S ADVANCE WAS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN CORAL GABLES. END SUMN RY.
2. AMBASSADOR RAISED SUBJECT OF PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN WHICH WOULD BRING OUT GULF'S SIDE OF THE CASE IN MEETING WITH LOCAL MANAGER JACK O'BRIEN AND ATTORNEYS GLEN LUCAS AND JIM WILCOX. THE ISSUE OF SUCH A CAMPAIGN HAD BEEN ONLY TOUCHED UPON IN A PREVIOUS MEETING (REFTEL QUITO 6473). AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED THAT ECUADOREAN PUBLIC IN GENERAL HAD NOT BEEN EXPOSED AT ALL TO GULF SIDE OF DISPUTE UNTIL O'BRIEN'S TELEVISION APPEARANCE TO READ GULF STATEMENT, AND THAT SOME POINTS COULD BE AMPLIFIED AND CLARIFIED WHICH WOULD GREATLY STRENGTHEN THE GULF PUBLIC POSITION.

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3. EMBASSY OFFERED NAMES OF KEY MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES WHO

MIGHT BE AMENDABLE TO CONTACT WITH GULF AND HAD SUFFICIENT INFLUENCE TO MAKE SUCH CONTACT WORTHWHILE. AMBASSADOR EMPHASIZED THAT CONTACT SHOULD BE PERSONAL AND PRIVATE, TO AVOID IMPRESSION OF ANOTHER PRESS CONFERENCE.

4. ALL THREE GULF OFFICIALS REACTED FAVORABLY, AND DISCUSSED POINTS THAT MIGHT BE RAISED WITH MEDIA. ON SEPTEMBER 13. O'BRIEN REPORTED HOWEVER, PROPOSAL WAS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION IN GULF HEADQUARTERS.

5. COMMENT: GOE IS VERY SENSITIVE TO PUBLIC OPINION AND WE BELIEVE THAT "INDIRECT" NEWSMEDIA CAMPAIGN COULD HAVE IMPORTANT EFFECT ON DECISIONS OF SUPREME COUNCIL ON THIS MATTER. THUS FAR THE ECUADOREAN PUBLIC HAS HEARD ONLY THE MINISTRY OF RESOURCES AND CEPE'S SIDE OF THE CONTROVERSY.
BLOOMFIELD

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